1-88   (Canceled)

89.   (Currently Amended) A method of controlling bidding status in an online auction, comprising:

setting a bid status to an open status for a lot with a closing time;

upon determining that said closing time is reached, setting said bid status to a pending status for said lot ~~at said closing time~~, said pending status indicating that no bids are temporarily accepted on said lot;

determining whether to change said bid status for said lot; and

setting said bid status in accordance with said determination.

90.   Canceled.

91.   (Original) The method of claim 89, wherein said lot has an associated status parameter and pending interval.

92.   (Original) The method of claim 89, wherein said determining comprises:

receiving a message to set said bid status to close; and

determining to set said bid status to close in accordance with said message.

93.   (Original) The method of claim 89, wherein said determining comprises:

receiving a message to set said bid status to open; and

determining to set said status to open in accordance with said message.

94. (Currently Amended) A machine-readable medium whose contents cause a computer system to control the bidding status in an online auction by performing:

setting a bid status to an open status for a lot with a closing time;

upon determining that said closing time is reached, setting said bid status to a pending status for said lot at said closing time, said pending status indicating that no bids are temporarily accepted on said lot;

determining whether to change said bid status for said lot; and

setting said bid status in accordance with said determination.

95. Canceled.

96. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 94, wherein said lot has an associated status parameter and pending interval.

97. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 94, wherein said determining comprises:

receiving a message to set said bid status to close; and

determining to set said bid status to open in accordance with said message.

98. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 94, wherein said determining comprises:

receiving a message to set said bid status to open; and

determining to set said bid status to open in accordance with said message.

99. (Currently Amended) A method to control bid status in an electronic auction between a sponsor of an auction and a plurality of bidders, comprising:

setting a bid status to an open status or an overtime status for a lot with a closing time;

upon determining that said closing time is reached, setting said bid status to a pending status for the lot ~~at the closing time~~, said pending status indicating that no bids are temporarily accepted on said lot;

determining whether a return to open trigger has occurred; and

setting said bid status to a new status according to said determination;

· wherein the sponsor and the bidders are coupled electronically over a communications network during the auction.

100.   Canceled.

101.   Canceled.

102.   Canceled.

103.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 99, wherein said pending status indicates that bids are not currently being accepted, but that the bid status may change such that bids will again be accepted.

104   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 99, wherein said new status is a closed for bidding status.

105.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 99, wherein said new status is an available for bidding status.

106.   (Previously Presented) The method of claim 99, wherein said new status is the open or overtime status.

107.   (Original) The method of claim 99, wherein said determining comprises:

determining whether an automatic close flag is set to Yes; and

determining to set said bid status to closed if said automatic close flag is set to Yes and an intervening condition does not occur prior to expiration of a pending interval.

108.   (Original) The method of claim 99, wherein said determining comprises:

determining whether an automatic close flag is set to Yes; and

determining to set said bid status to closed if said automatic close flag is set to Yes and an intervening condition occurs prior to expiration of a pending interval.

109.   (Original) The method of claim 99, wherein said determining comprises:

determining whether an automatic close flag is set to Yes; and

determining to set said bid status to closed if said automatic close flag is set to No and an intervening condition does not occur prior to expiration of a pending interval.

110.   (Original) The method of claim 99, wherein said determining comprises:

determining whether an automatic close flag is set to Yes; and

determining to set said bid status to closed if said automatic close flag is set to No and an intervening condition occurs prior to expiration of a pending interval.

111.   (Original) The method of claim 99, wherein said determining comprises:

determining whether an automatic close flag is set to Yes; and

determining to set said bid status to an available for bidding status if said automatic close flag is set to Yes and an intervening condition does not occur prior to expiration of a pending interval.

112. (Original) The method of claim 99, wherein said determining comprises:

determining whether an automatic close flag is set to Yes; and

determining to set said bid status to an available for bidding status if said automatic close flag is set to Yes and an intervening condition occurs prior to expiration of a pending interval.

113. (Original) The method of claim 99, wherein said determining comprises:

determining whether an automatic close flag is set to Yes; and

determining to set said bid status to an available for bidding status if said automatic close flag is set to No and an intervening condition does not occur prior to expiration of a pending interval.

114. (Original) The method of claim 99, wherein said determining comprises:

determining whether an automatic close flag is set to Yes; and

determining to set said bid status to an available for bidding status if said automatic close flag is set to No and an intervening condition occurs prior to expiration of a pending interval.

115. (Currently Amended) A machine-readable medium whose contents cause a computer system to control bid status in an electronic auction between a sponsor of the auction and a plurality of bidders, having instructions stored thereon which, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:

setting a bid status to an open status or an overtime status for a lot with a closing time;

upon determining that said closing time is reached, setting said bid status to a pending status for the lot at the closing time, said pending status indicating that no bids are temporarily accepted on said lot;

determining whether a return to open trigger has occurred; and

setting said bid status to a new status according to said determination;

wherein the sponsor and the bidders are coupled electronically over a communications

network during the auction.

116. Canceled.

117. Canceled.

118. Canceled.

119. (Previously Presented) The machine-readable medium of claim 115, wherein said pending status indicates that bids are not currently being accepted, but that the bid status may change such that bids will be again be accepted.

120. (Previously Presented) The machine-readable medium of claim 115, wherein said new status is a closed for bidding status.

121. (Previously Presented) The machine-readable medium of claim 115, wherein said new status is an available for bidding status.

122. (Previously Presented) The machine-readable medium of claim 115, wherein said new status is the open or overtime status.

123. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 115, wherein said instructions to determine comprises instructions to:

determine whether an automatic close flag is set to Yes; and

determine to set said bid status to closed if said automatic close flag is set to Yes and an intervening condition does not occur prior to expiration of a pending interval.

124. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 115, wherein said instructions to determine comprise instructions to:

determine whether an automatic close flag is set to Yes; and

determine to set said bid status to closed if said automatic close flag is set to Yes and an intervening condition occurs prior to expiration of a pending interval.

125. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 115, wherein said instructions to determine comprise instructions to:

determine whether an automatic close flag is set to Yes; and

determine to set said bid status to closed if said automatic close flag is set to No and an intervening condition does not occur prior to expiration of a pending interval.

126. (Previously Presented) The machine-readable medium of claim 115, wherein said instructions to determine comprise instructions to:

determine whether an automatic close flag is set to Yes; and

determine to set said bid status to closed if said automatic close flag is set to No and an intervening condition occurs prior to expiration of a pending interval.

127. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 115, wherein said instructions to determine comprise instructions to:

determine whether an automatic close flag is set to Yes; and

determine to set said bid status to an available for bidding status if said automatic close flag is set to Yes and an intervening condition does not occur prior to expiration of a pending interval.

128. (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 115, wherein said instructions to determine comprises instructions to:

determine whether an automatic close flag is set to Yes; and

determine to set said bid status to an available for bidding status if said automatic close

flag is set to Yes and an intervening condition occurs prior to expiration of a pending interval.

129.   (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 115, wherein said instructions to

determine comprises instructions to:

determine whether an automatic close flag is set to Yes; and

determine to set said bid status to an available for bidding status if said automatic close

flag is set to No and an intervening condition does not occur prior to expiration of a pending

interval.

130.   (Original) The machine-readable medium of claim 115, wherein said instructions to

determine comprises instructions to:

determine whether an automatic close flag is set to Yes; and

determine to set said bid status to an available for bidding status if said automatic close

flag is set to No and an intervening condition occurs prior to expiration of a pending interval.

131.   (Currently Amended) A method of controlling bidding status of a lot in an electronic

auction, wherein said lot has a closing time, comprising:

setting a bidding status for said lot to an open status indicating that bids will be received

from bidders on said lot;

receiving bids from bidders for said lot;

[[at]] upon determining that said closing time is reached, changing said bidding status for

said lot to a pending status indicating that bids will not be accepted on said lot but that said

bidding status may subsequently be changed to a status indicating that bids will be received;

determining whether a return to open trigger event has occurred within a predefined time

period following the changing of said bidding status from said open status to said pending status;

if said return to open trigger event has not occurred, setting said bidding status to a close status indicating that bidding for said lot is closed; and

if said return to open trigger event has occurred, setting said bidding status to an open status indicating that said lot is open for bidding.

132.   (Original) The method of claim 131, wherein said determining comprises receiving a communication from a bidder indicating a request for an opportunity for further bidding.

133.   Canceled.

134.   (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium for controlling bidding status of a lot in an electronic auction, wherein said lot has a closing time, the medium containing instructions which, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to:

setting a bidding status for said lot to an open status indicating that bids will be received from bidders on said lot;

receiving bids from bidders for said lot;

~~at~~ upon determining that said closing time is reached, changing said bidding status for said lot to a pending status indicating that bids will not be accepted on said lot but that said bidding status may subsequently be changed to a status indicating that bids will be received;

determining whether a return to open trigger event has occurred within a predefined time period following the changing of said bidding status from said open status to said pending status;

if said return to open trigger event has not occurred, setting said bidding status to a close status indicating that bidding for said lot is closed; and

if said return to open trigger event has occurred, setting said bidding status to an open status indicating that said lot is open for bidding.

135.   (Original) The computer-readable medium of claim 134, wherein said instructions to

determine comprise instructions to receive a communication from a bidder indicating a request for an opportunity for further bidding.

136.   Canceled.

137.   (Currently Amended) A method of controlling bid status in a multi-lot electronic auction, wherein each lot has a closing time and a bid status, comprising:

setting a first closing time for a first lot, and a second closing time for a second lot, wherein said first closing time precedes said second closing time;

setting a first bid status for the first lot to a value indicating that bids will be accepted for said first lot;

setting a second bid status for the second lot to a value indicating that bids will be accepted for said second lot;

at upon determining that said first closing time is reached, setting said first bid status to a value indicating that bids will not be accepted for said first lot, but said first bid status may subsequently be changed to a value indicating that bids will be accepted for said first lot;

before said second closing time, determining whether a return to open trigger condition has occurred; and

if said condition has occurred, setting said first bid status to a status indicating that bids will be accepted for said first lot, and updating said first closing time so that it is subsequent to said second closing time.

138.   (Currently Amended) A machine readable medium for controlling bid status in a multi-lot electronic auction, wherein each lot has a closing time and a bid status, comprising instructions for:

setting a first closing time for a first lot, and a second closing time for a second lot, wherein said first closing time precedes said second closing time;

setting a first bid status for the first lot to a value indicating that bids will be accepted for said first lot;

setting a second bid status for the second lot to a value indicating that bids will be accepted for said second lot;

at upon determining that said first closing time is reached, setting said first bid status to a value indicating that bids will not be accepted for said first lot, but said first bid status may subsequently be changed to a value indicating that bids will be accepted for said first lot;

before said second closing time, determining whether a return to open trigger condition has occurred; and

if said condition has occurred, setting said first bid status to a status indicating that bids will be accepted for said first lot, and updating said first closing time so that it is subsequent to said second closing time.

139-148.   Canceled.